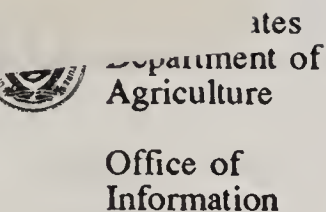


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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

USDA ENDS INTENSIFIED HEPTACHLOR TESTING

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the end of a four-month intensified surveillance program in which poultry and swine in 10 states were tested for traces of the pesticide heptachlor.

“Based on our test results, we are satisfied that there is no contamination problem,” said Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service. “Therefore, we will return to routine monitoring.”

“Since May, we have checked more than 2,100 hogs from 146 plants, and nearly 1,800 poultry samples from 70 plants, for heptachlor,” said Crawford. “None showed any heptachlor residues, except for an isolated case—one hog in Tennessee. Because of difficulties in tracing that hog’s owner, we continue to investigate that case.”

EPA banned heptachlor for all agricultural uses except as a seed treatment in 1978, because the pesticide had been shown to induce tumors in mice. In May 1989, EPA banned the use of heptachlor, including existing stocks, as a seed treatment.

Also in May, violative levels of heptachlor were detected in chickens at one poultry operation in Arkansas. The firm voluntarily destroyed more than half-million chickens and thousands of pounds of processed product.

In response to this incident, FSIS quickly set up an intense testing program in Arkansas and nine surrounding states (Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas) to determine if the problem was widespread.

FSIS inspects all meat and poultry sold in interstate commerce to ensure that it is safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

NATIVE PLANTS DONATED TO CELEBRATE COLUMBUS' 500th ANNIVERSARY

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5—To help celebrate the coming 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the New World in 1492, the U.S. National Arboretum has made a gift of native North American plants to Spain.

Arboretum horticulturist Sylvester March said the plants will be part of the 1992 World's Fair in Seville. They will join similar contributions from South and Central American countries in the landscaping and park areas around the exposition's grounds on La Cartuja Island near Seville.

"We chose plants that are representative of many parts of North America," said March. He supervised the selection and shipment of the plants by the arboretum, which is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service.

March said more than 600 specimens were shipped this year to give them time to become established and reach full development before the exposition opens in 1992.

The arboretum's selections ranged from the agave, a hardy succulent, to the palmetto and the rare *Magnolia virginiana* var. *australis*, seldom seen even in the United States. All the plants are suited to Seville's Mediterranean climate, according to March.

"All of them belong to species previously unknown in European horticulture, and this is an excellent opportunity to introduce them to Spain's gardens," said Lorenzo Gonzalez Alonso, minister for economic and commercial affairs at the Embassy of Spain here.

At least 50,000 trees of more than 200 different varieties and over 150,000 bushes and shrubs already have been received for the gardens.

In addition to helping commemorate Columbus' explorations and enhancing the exposition's grounds, the plants will contribute to a major forest improvement project for the island of La Cartuja, according to Spanish officials.

The island is a particularly appropriate site for the new world garden because of its historic relationship to Columbus. The explorer often visited the Carthusian Monastery located on La Cartuja to consult their extensive library and where the Chapel of Santa Ana was built to house his remains.

The National Arboretum, in addition to acting as a repository to preserve woody plants, has an active breeding program to produce new

varieties of trees and landscape plants that are hardier, more disease resistant or that offer colors and sizes previously unavailable.

As preparations continue in Spain for the anniversary of Columbus' voyage, March is conducting a transoceanic exploration of his own, said arboretum director Marc Cathey. March is searching in South Korea this month for hardier versions of many woody plants including elms, hollies and camelias. His trip is in cooperation with several U.S. arboreturns and botanical gardens and the University of Seoul, Cathey said.

Kim Kaplan (301) 344-3932

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Oct. 6, through midnight Thursday, Oct. 12.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1987, 1988 and 1989 crop base quality loan rates of 52.25, 51.80 and 50.00 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates for the 1987, 1988 and 1989 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. Because the AWP in effect is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1989-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

Based on data for the week ending Oct. 5, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price	81.97
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	12.26
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.20
Average U.S. location	0.39
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-14.85</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	67.12 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price	81.97
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-77.22</u>
	4.75
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.75</u>
	-4.75
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Oct. 12.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

METHOD TO FIGHT ACID RAIN ALSO HELPS SOIL, IS SAFE FOR CROPS AND ANIMALS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 6—A pollution-cutting way to burn coal for electricity yields a by-product that can safely be used to improve soil on farms and strip mines according, to a 10-year study at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The by-product contains gypsum and various essential plant nutrients—sulfur, calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, iron, molybdenum, boron, copper and zinc. And a new manual explains how to make sure the small amounts of toxic compounds in the by-product stay within safe limits in the soil, said William L. Stout of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

In tests, some lasting up to seven years, “we found no excessive levels of harmful substances in soil or plants,” said Stout, a soil scientist.

“Cows and sheep did not get toxic quantities from forage, neither did

pigs fed corn, wheat, soybeans, fruit and vegetables.”

Stout said a 1,000-megawatt power plant using the cleaner coal-burning technology can yield about 2,000 tons of residue a day, “enough for a typical application on 500 acres. Right now, power plants must dispose of this residue.” All farm uses of it must be approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and state and local regulatory agencies, he noted.

About 70 power plants in this country now use the technology, called atmospheric fluidized bed combustion (AFBC) to remove acid-forming oxides of sulfur, the major contributors to acid rain, said Stout, of the U.S. Regional Pasture Research Laboratory, University Park, Pa.

In AFBC, crushed coal and finely ground limestone are “fluidized”—suspended by jets of air—and burned at a controlled rate and temperature, he said. Sulfur from the coal reacts with calcium in the limestone to form gypsum, calcium oxide and some oxides of metals, including small amounts of toxic heavy metals like cadmium.

Stout said farmers should take precautions with the residue, just as they would for any fertilizer or liming agent. Farmers should adhere to standards set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute for Occupational and Safety Health, he said.

ARS scientists and colleagues from state agricultural experiment stations in Auburn, Ala., Blacksburg, Va., and Morgantown, W. Va., conducted tests on the residue. The studies were funded over a 10-year period by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Tennessee Valley Authority’s National Fertilizer Development Center.

“The tests showed that the residue is best used as a liming agent to lower soil acidity,” said soil scientist Ronald F. Korcak of the ARS Fruit Laboratory, Beltsville, Md. “Gypsum gives the residue an advantage over lime, he added, by making near-microscopic particles of clay unite to form granules. The spaces between the granules give water and fertilizer better access to roots.”

The researchers’ new manual is for power plant managers, consultants and government agencies, said Korcak, who wrote it along with Stout, James L. Hern, formerly with ARS, and retired ARS scientist Carl W. Carlson.

According to Carlson, fluidized bed combustion may in the future be an efficient way to dispose of garbage without resorting to landfills or ocean dumping. “Many municipalities are already hard-pressed for landfill sites,” he said, “and technology gained from the present studies

could be used to develop electric generating plants that burn garbage without polluting the air. This might put an end to ocean dumping of wastes.”

Stout said the residue could also be used in roadbeds and as an aggregate in cement and building blocks.

Vince Mazzola (301) 344-1712

#

NO FINAL PAYMENTS TO BE MADE FOR 1988-CROP CORN AND SORGHUM

WASHINGTON, Oct. 6—No final “Findley” payments will be made for 1988-crop corn and sorghum under the price support and production program because the 12-month national weighted average market prices for these commodities exceeded the basic loan rates.

Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corp., said the national average market prices per bushel received by producers from September 1988 through August 1989 were \$2.54 for corn and \$2.27 for sorghum (\$4.05 per hundredweight). The basic loan rate for each of these commodities was \$2.21 and \$2.10, respectively. No final payments were earned, since the 12-month prices were greater than the basic loan rates.

Also, corn producers who requested advance deficiency payments will be required to refund 8 cents per bushel since their advance deficiency payment exceeded the 5-month deficiency payment.

Refund of this overpayment will be due on Dec. 31.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

#

IMMIGRANT BUGS FROM RUSSIA MAY FIGHT APHIDS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10—Some of the newest Russian immigrants in this country are of the six-legged, winged variety.

The recent arrivals, seven species of lady beetles and wasps, may soon be enlisted to help American farmers battle the Russian wheat aphid, said Richard S. Soper of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“This pest has spread to 16 states in just three years, damaging wheat,

barley, rye and oats," said Soper, who coordinates research on biological pest controls for USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, Md.

"The newly imported wasps and lady beetles are the first exchanges of biological pest controls to come from recent USDA research agreements with the Soviet Union," he said. Such controls could become new alternatives to chemicals used against a variety of insects, plant diseases and weeds.

Soper left Monday for the USSR to firm up plans for next year's joint studies and explorations.

Russian wheat aphids, first spotted in the United States in Texas in 1986, have become a major research target. They cost farmers an estimated \$123 million in damage and chemical control costs in 1988, Soper said.

"We have taken steps to share the new insects with researchers in ARS and other institutions. But lab and field testing is essential to identify which insects could best fight the aphid for farmers," he cautioned.

The three wasp and four lady beetle species were collected by insect pathologist Tadeusz Poprawski and entomologist Francis Gruber in the southern Soviet Union in May and June. Both scientists work at the ARS European Parasite Laboratory in Behoust, France.

Their exploration was based in Kishinev, Moldavia, at the new Soviet-American Biological Control Laboratory. After their return to France, they sent the wasps and lady beetles to the ARS Beneficial Insects Research Laboratory in Newark, Del., for quarantine, rearing of new generations and distribution.

The new arrivals are known to be natural enemies of the aphid, but most have not been tested against it in experiments, said Lawrence R. Ertle, an entomologist who heads the quarantine section of the Newark lab.

In August, Ertle said, Praon and Diaeretiella wasps were shipped to the ARS Wheat and Other Cereal Crops Research unit in Stillwater, Okla. These wasps joined relatives from Turkey, Syria, Jordan and France. Researchers are evaluating all of them to determine the best candidates for field tests.

To provide ample supplies of insects for research studies and releases, the Newark lab sent Aphelinus wasps to a mass-rearing facility of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Mission, Texas. APHIS is multiplying the lady beetles—Coccinella, Propylea and two species of Hippodamia—in Niles, Mich.

Research on the lady beetles will be done at the ARS Northern Grain Insects Research Laboratory, Brookings, S.D.

Soper said other researchers will go to Russia this year to search for or conduct studies of biocontrols for the Russian wheat aphid and rangeland weeds such as leafy spurge and knapweed. The work will be based at Kishinev and at the Zoological Institute of the USSR's Academy of Sciences in Leningrad.

Other agency efforts against the aphid include:

- Lab and field tests with biological controls;
- Developing aphid-resistant crop varieties;
- Determining mechanisms of the aphid's damage to plants; and
- Creating computer simulations so potential control strategies can be assessed.

Jim De Quattro (301) 344-4296

#

USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD TO RECOGNIZE CHILE FREE OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending the comment period on a recent proposal to recognize Chile as free of foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest. Under the proposal, Chile would be listed with countries that, although declared free of these two diseases, are subject to special restrictions on the imports of meat and other animal products into the United States.

“These restrictions are appropriate because Chile has common land borders with countries that are affected by rinderpest or foot-and-mouth disease. Chile also imports meat from countries known to be affected with these diseases, and Chile's import requirements might be less restrictive than those of the United States,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

On Aug. 17, 1989, the proposal was published in the Federal Register with an October 16 deadline for response.

“Since that time,” Glosser said, “we have received requests from representatives of industry and state departments of agriculture to extend the comment period so the proposed regulations can be discussed at the annual meeting of the U.S. Animal Health Association, scheduled for

early November. This extension will allow participants at the meeting adequate time to formulate their comments.”

Comments now will be accepted until Nov. 15. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 88-216 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141-S., 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Questa Glenn (301) 436-7799

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WHEAT SPROUT DAMAGE NECESSITATES FGIS FALLING NUMBER TESTING

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Federal Grain Inspection Service is receiving reports of sprout damage in a portion of the 1989 wheat crop. In response to the growing need for accurate assessment of sprout damage in wheat, FGIS has expanded and upgraded its Falling Number testing service.

Falling Number testing determines incipient sprout damage in wheat by indirectly measuring alpha-amylase activity, which actually begins before the sprout becomes visually apparent.

Extended rainy periods followed by hot, humid weather during this year’s growing season resulted in increased sprouting. In such conditions, alpha-amylase, an enzyme in the germ of the wheat kernel, converts starch in the berry to simple sugars. The sugar conversion damages and reduces the starch content of the grain.

FGIS uses state-of-the-art Falling Number 1800 series instruments in the national inspection system. FGIS offers Falling Number testing at six field locations: Portland, Ore.; Olympia, Wash.; Moscow, Ind.; Montreal, Canada; Beltsville, Md.; Grand Forks, N.D. The service is also available at four state offices located in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

Falling Numbers testing provides critical information which is needed to accurately assess sprout damage in wheat. This service is especially crucial in light of the incidence of sprout damage. Investment in the latest

generation of Falling Number equipment has increased the capability of the national inspection system to provide accurate, timely information about the quality of U.S. wheat.

David Orr (202) 382-1013

Dana Blatt (202) 382-0378

#

JEANNE YEUTTER IS FIRST VOLUNTEER IN TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12—Jeanne Yeutter, wife of the secretary of agriculture, today became the first volunteer in the Forest Service's new "TREEmendous America" campaign to support tree-planting and reforestation efforts across the United States.

Mrs. Yeutter will serve as an honorary official and speaker for USDA's Forest Service at special events such as tree-planting ceremonies, Tree City USA celebrations, environmental education events, and selected conferences and meetings. A special focus of her efforts will be tree planting in urban areas, she said.

"At our farm in Nebraska," Mrs. Yeutter said, "we plant trees to commemorate special family occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries. We are learning more each day about the value of trees to our environment, and every one of us enjoys the beauty trees add to our communities and homes. I want to do my part to support tree planting now for the benefit of future generations of Americans."

Mrs. Yeutter joins 70,000 other volunteers whose conservation work supports Forest Service programs. These volunteers work in many settings in the National Forest System, research stations, and other facilities across the country.

Mrs. Yeutter has supported numerous volunteer and charitable efforts over the years. She and Secretary Yeutter are parents of four children and live in McLean, Va.

Susan Hess (202) 447-3760

Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623

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